



Brand Activity and Process Management for Small and Medium-Size Enterprises

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ABSTRACT

Although an amazing amount of literature has evolved concentrating on the important tasks involved in brand management for bigger organisations with well-established brands and considerable marketing expenditures, no study has been undertaken to analyse branding inside small to medium-sized firms. This is despite the fact that there has been an increase in the number of small and medium-sized enterprises in recent years (SMEs). This study's overarching objective is to evaluate the nature and breadth of brand management as it relates to small and medium-sized businesses. It is indicated that there are considerable variations between small and big firms along nine of the ten characteristics of brand management. In addition, diverse brand management techniques are linked to the success of businesses that are classified as SMEs. This paper highlights the implications of the work, draw attention to its shortcomings, and lay out some suggestions for further research.

1. Introduction

The strategic significance of efficient brand management [1] has been acknowledged for some time in the scholarly literature [2] on marketing [3]. Two distinct lines of research have developed: the first focuses on providing an overall brand management model [4] to implement managerial decision-making [5]; the second focuses on various discrete aspects of the process. These research lines have emerged in recent years [6]. Businesses that focus their management policies and procedures on creating, purchasing, and using branded goods and services will be in a better position to realise positive increases in their overall levels of performance [7]. On the other hand, two significant holes in the research may be found. First, there is an increasing awareness of the fact that successful businesses often follow numerous orientations all at the same time. This phenomenon is what many in the field call "organisational ambidexterity" [8]. More specifically, the research that has been done reveals that market orientation by itself may not always provide the desired outcomes for every kind of business [9]. Few empirical studies have been conducted to determine the degree to which businesses concentrate on alternative business philosophies such as brand management. Second, the brand management literature has almost entirely focused on major global companies. Small and medium-sized businesses have been neglected for the most part. This is astonishing considering that most firms are small to medium-sized companies. Is it possible since smaller and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often do not have the capabilities, marketing strength, and other resources of more extensive and established businesses [10]? Or, do small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) fail to recognise that brands may be created and maintained on expenditures considered to be quite low [11]? We claim that small and medium-sized business marketers can effectively manage and use the complete capacity of their businesses even when operating with limited resources. The issue that arises next is whether brand management ideas, techniques, or philosophies are best suited for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs).

By contrasting the practices of SMEs with those of LOs, the current research aims to fill in some of these knowledge gaps by determining the nature and extent of brand management in the context of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) [12]. First, it discusses the characteristics of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and (some of) the marketing issues they confront. Following this, a description of the current work will be provided, a discussion of the findings, a notation of the limitations, and an overview of some potential future research avenues in this field.

This paper is organised in the following format: Section 2 is specified for the marketing of SMEs. Section 3 provides a discussion related to customer relationship management. Section 4 is specified for SME branding. Section 5 is dedicated for conclusions and discussion.

2. Marketing SME

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) make up most companies in most industrialised nations. As an example, out of the 5.7 million firms that exist in the USA, just 14,000 are responsible for the employment of more than 500 people. In addition, small and medium-sized businesses significantly contribute to a nation's gross domestic product, employment levels, and export performance.

It has been known for a long time that SMEs and LOs have distinct differences in their management styles, operations, and roles. The owner-manager of a small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) is typically the person who makes the most important decisions and is accountable for handling and attending to a large number of the functionality provided within the organisation. These functions may include banking, marketing, recruitment, or even the purchase of stationery. Using specialised labour, including advertising or recruiting companies, is not common practice. In addition, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often struggle with a lack of resources in terms of money and time.

Consequently, many of these enterprises' owner-managers develop a "survival mindset". This is maybe worsened by the fact that the planning process inside SMEs is often lacking. As a result, the management approach SMEs use is quite distinctive and individualised to each company.

Several academics, in a hurry, have been ready to promote the merits of having a diminutive stature. They claim that in contrast to LOs, SMEs tend to be more entrepreneurial, flexible, and inventive, enabling them to serve better specialised or niche markets while still being sensitive to the requirements of their customers. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have a more significant potential to connect close to their consumers and collect user input, which can then be leveraged to give those clients an individualised service that adds value. Research has also demonstrated that entrepreneurial small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have a more substantial capacity to harness marketing tactics for entering new markets and dealing with challenging conditions. In addition, non-entrepreneurial people tend to have a lower level of organisational learning. In comparison, entrepreneurial people tend to demonstrate a higher cognitive level of corporate teaching and are more proficient at receiving and using marketing knowledge.

However, studies have shown that small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are more likely to face challenges in marketing, management of human resources, and overall business planning [13]. It is far more challenging to choose a suitable promotional medium, develop content, plan and carry out market research, and understand marketing information when marketing knowledge is lacking since this compounding factor adds to the complexity. This is due, in part, to the limited financial, technical, and managerial resources available, as well as the absence of management information systems and the concentration of decision-making power with the owner-manager the majority of the time. In addition, marketing is often more responsive to customers' requirements rather than proactive in meeting customers' needs. As the company grows, the managers of SMEs start experimenting with various marketing strategies. As time goes on, they gain experience and expertise and are better at adapting those marketing approaches to the organisation's needs that yield favourable outcomes.

It would seem that the traditional marketing ideas recommended in the relevant body of marketing literature are not always capable of being wholly grasped or used within a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often engage in marketing endeavours that are realistic and practical and designed to meet the one-of-a-kind requirements, conditions, and capabilities of the specific SME. When faced with limited resources, managers of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often prioritise tasks that they feel would benefit the firm most while also making the best use of the resources at their disposal. In addition, most marketing concepts are modified to accommodate a small SME's specific circumstances, and most owner-managers depend heavily on their intuition, experience, or judgment when making such judgments [14].

3. Customer Relationship Management

The vast majority of marketing researchers believe that a substantial divide can be drawn between the identity or image of a firm and its reputation. The most recent perceptions that the public has about a firm or the overall impression that an organisation produces with the public are both considered to be examples of a corporation's corporate image. Reputation in the business world, on either hand, refers to the value judgements that have been formed through time on a firm's quality, integrity, and dependability. A company's reputation is more long-lasting than its appearance and cannot be established or changed rapidly. In a similar vein, it needs care and attention over time.

It has been hypothesised that effective brand management may assist close the gap that exists between the image or identity of a brand and its reputation. Developing, organising, and analysing interactions between a company and its members so there is coherence between an organisation's vision and stakeholders' views about a brand is referred to as brand management. Businesses need to concentrate on developing a suitable brand image that may carve out a certain section of the market early on. Elements of the marketing mix must be used to operationalise the notion and convey this information to a specific audience. As the brand (and the organisation) grows, the focus of managerial efforts should

shift forward into making a product memorable, making sure that favourable brand associations can be readily recalled by consumers, and strengthening the link between a brand's image and other products within a company's portfolio of offerings. It does not matter if an organisation is formed of a single or numerous brands; marketing efforts must be oriented toward developing and sustaining a favourable brand image in the eyes of key stakeholders. A positive brand image is essential to an organisation's success. In the end, this may be something that helps contribute to the creation of a positive business reputation [15].

4. SME Branding

In general, managers of small businesses acknowledge the significance of maintaining a positive company image to get legitimisation from various stakeholders. However, the challenge that often occurs is in the process of converting this worldview into particular acts that develop a reputation. One method for developing and enhancing a company's reputation is by managing that company's public image. Although considerable academic emphasis has focused on the marketing of SMEs, researchers were unable to find any earlier study that focused specifically on the management of brands in SMEs. Two studies make a passing reference to this problem by drawing a contrast between the organisation structure and corporate cultures of companies that manage some of the world's most well-known brands and those that handle less well-known, or outsider, brands.

According to the findings, some facets of a company's culture affect how brands are administered. When a need for "image management" is identified, it is typically just restricted to launching a public relations campaign. Very few small enterprises are suggested to adopt a reputation-building strategy [16]. However, as is clear from the literature on brand management, the process of maintaining a large corporation and brand image might easily include a far more comprehensive range of activities. This is visible in the literature. This seems to imply that the method of brand management used by large organisations is different from that utilised by SMEs, which raises the issue of how brands are, in reality, managed inside SMEs.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

Over the years, marketing academics and professionals have continued to broaden the scope for brand management and identify the essential methods, ideas, and philosophies that businesses need to use. It should come as no surprise that the spotlight has often been on the most successful companies in the world. As a result, managers of significant organisations with considerable marketing expenditures have access to a wealth of information (even if not all of it is empirical) to direct their efforts to brand their companies. The subject of how smaller companies with fewer resources may successfully maintain their brands has been entirely ignored by scholars up until now. This research analysed the nature and extent of brand management in small and medium-sized businesses. To be more specific, our goal was to determine, in the first place, whether the BMPs used by SMEs vary from those utilised by large organisations in the second place, if these variations apply to high-performing and low-performing SMEs.

According to the findings, there are unquestionably significant disparities between large organisations and SMEs regarding the degree to which they apply essential BMPs. Both small and large organisations are aware of the necessity to provide clients with relevant and appealing brands. On the other hand, the BMPs that large organisations use to place a greater emphasis on comprehending and keeping track of the requirements of customers as well as evaluating the success of activities taken in the past.

More significantly, high-performing SMEs adopt key BMPs to a larger degree than low-performing SMEs. This difference in implementation is significant. By returning to "branding basics," brand-focused small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can achieve a distinct performance advantage over competitors. This advantage can be achieved by understanding customers' needs and perceptions, creating relevant and valued brands, supporting the brand steadily over time, effectively communicating the brand's identity to various stakeholder groups, and developing a compelling brand architecture. The research acknowledges these actions as vital to constructing and administering brand equity over a more extended period. In particular, this provides evidence that small and SMEs can improve their performance by imitating and tailoring the brand management operations of their bigger counterparts to the requirements and constraints of their unique situations. In the end, this should be able to contribute, at least in some little manner, to the continued performance of organisations.

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